

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,  
Broadcasters are not keeping their end of the agreement, in exchange for their free use of the public airwaves. I want you to define meaningful public interest requirements for the broadcasters. Both type and quality of content and how much time to be spend should be in the requirements.

At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

As for content, I want news (infotainment) programs to broadcast the candidate's actual speeches, and policy statements. Too much air time is taken up with spin by pundits of all political persuasions.

Also, it is a big public dis-service to just report the political races like they were horse races. As I am sure you realize, many people vote for whoever appears to be winning because they want to be on the winning side when it is over. This is not democracy.

The FCC is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the Public airwaves be used to benefit the Public, not just the big broadcasting corporations.

Our democracy is at risk when many Americans don't know basic facts about the candidates or the issues, as was the case in the 2000 elections.

Since broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest, the FCC should define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

Sincerely,

Gale Marple  
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